British Columbia Foundation Skills Assessment 2001

Highlights

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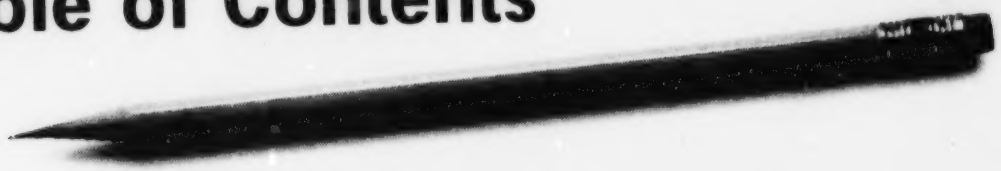

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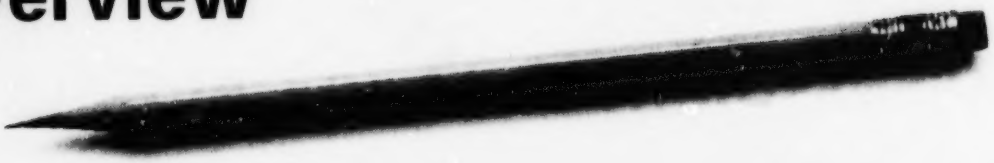
Overview



This document presents the highlights of Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) 2001. The FSA is an annual assessment that tests the reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy skills of grades 4, 7, and 10 students across British Columbia. These highlights include a general description of the assessment and related resources, the steps in the provincial assessment process, and the overall provincial FSA results. Differences in the performance of students in specific education programs, and the performance of male and female students are reported. There are also comparisons between FSA 2001 and other assessments and examinations administered in British Columbia.

Consistent with the findings of past provincial, national, and international assessments and examinations, the overall performance of BC students on FSA 2001 was good, with over 75 per cent of students performing at or above the expected standards for reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy at each grade. Of ongoing concern, however, is the proportion of students, particularly boys and Aboriginal/First Nations students, who have not yet reached the expected levels of performance.

About the Foundation Skills Assessment

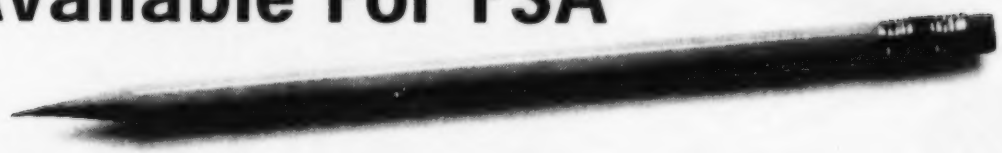
Each spring, students in grades 4, 7, and 10 across British Columbia take part in the FSA, an assessment of reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy.

The main purpose of this assessment is to help the province, school districts, and individual schools evaluate how well reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy are being addressed and make plans for improvement. A secondary purpose is to provide teachers, students, and parents or guardians with an additional, external source of information about a student's performance in these important foundation skill areas.

The FSA measures critical skills that are embedded in the provincial curricula. Although not confined to any single course or grade, the skills assessed by the FSA are most closely linked to prescribed learning outcomes in language arts and mathematics.

The FSA is not designed to be comprehensive or diagnostic, but rather to provide a snapshot of how well students are attaining important foundation skills in relation to provincial standards. The information it offers should complement, not replace, other information about schools and individual students collected in the school or classroom.

Results and Resources Available For FSA



Starting in 2000, FSA results are available at the provincial, district, school, and individual student levels. Results are sent to districts and participating schools each fall.

FSA 2001 provincial results are outlined in this resource and are available in the standard format used for reporting results to districts and schools at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/results/

School and district results are in the public domain and are distributed by schools and districts to individuals who request them.

Individual student results are confidential and protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. School staff may only share an individual student's results with the student and his or her parents or guardians. Individual results on the FSA do not count towards students' report card marks.

A range of resources are available to help familiarize districts, schools, parents, and students with FSA and assist them in the interpretation and use of FSA results. These include:

- **Interpreting and Communicating British Columbia Foundation Skills Assessment Results 2001**
  This document provides information to support school and district personnel as they interpret results from FSA 2001. It includes background information on FSA 2001 and suggests ways to use assessment results to improve school and district programs and enhance student achievement. It also suggests ways to communicate assessment results to students, parents or guardians, and other members of the community. This document is available on the FSA Web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/interpret.htm
- **Communicating Individual Students' FSA Results**
  This brochure provides information to assist school personnel in communicating individual students' FSA results to students and parents or guardians. It is available on the FSA Web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/communicate.pdf

- **Foundation Skills Assessment—Information for Students, Parents and Guardians**
  This brochure provides students and parents or guardians with general information about the assessment. It is distributed in fourteen languages to schools and students prior to the administration of FSA. An electronic copy is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/brochure.htm

- **FSA 2001 Tables of Specifications**
  Test specifications for the reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy components of FSA 2001 were provided to all participating schools prior to the administration of the assessment. Copies are available in *Interpreting and Communicating British Columbia Foundations Skills Assessment Results 2001* and on the FSA Web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/publications.htm

- **Sample Questions**
  To help teachers prepare students for the assessment, sample questions and scoring guides were available prior to the administration of FSA 2001. These practice questions were intended to familiarize students with the format of the assessment and the types of questions used in the FSA. Electronic copies of grades 4, 7, and 10 practice questions are available in English and French at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/sample_tests.htm

Components of FSA 2001

FSA 2001 consisted of a set of tests that assessed selected reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy skills of students in grades 4, 7, and 10. Overviews of each component, along with sample questions, are provided on the next three pages.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension in a variety of genres (literary passages, poetry, and informational texts) was assessed through a combination of multiple-choice and written-answer questions. At each grade, students were given approximately 40 reading comprehension questions.

Several levels of reading comprehension were assessed in FSA 2001. These included a student's ability to:

- identify and interpret key concepts and main ideas from a reading selection;
- locate, interpret, and organize details; and
- draw reasoned conclusions from reading selections and defend their conclusions rationally (critical analysis).

Sample Grade 4 Reading Comprehension Passage and Questions

Although many people do not like bats, these creatures are really quite interesting. Read the following selection to find out more about these unusual animals.

Bats

Using their highly successful radar to catch night-flying insects, bats consume up to half their weight every night in moths, mosquitoes, beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, and flies. For example, a single little brown bat (weighing 6 grams) may catch up to 600 insects an hour in its preferred habitat[1], near water.

Bats enter a building for a variety of reasons, including simply flying in by accident. They may use buildings as a temporary daytime roost[2], as a nursery to rear their young or, occasionally, as a hibernation[3] site. Attics are a favourite bat refuge.

In September, bats travel to a winter hibernation site, usually in a cave, old mine shaft, attic or wall void, where they spend the next 6-8 months until spring.

Bats found on the ground may be injured or sick. They may also be healthy, but stranded, since bats have a hard time taking off from a level surface. They should be gently scooped up with a shovel placed in a ventilated box and taken to your local BC Environment office or Agriculture Canada veterinarian.

[1] habitat: the place where a plant or animal normally lives and grows

[2] roost: a place where birds or bats naturally gather

[3] hibernation: to pass the winter in an inactive or dormant state

"Bats" from Bats. Pamphlet published by the BC Ministry of Environment Lands & Parks 1994.

Where is a favourite place for bats to hibernate?

A. in a cave
B. near water
C. on the ground
D. in a ventilated box

Why might a bat be found on the ground?

A. It could be taking a rest.
B. It could be injured or sick.
C. It could be looking for food.
D. It could be nursing its young.

Writing

Writing was assessed by asking students to respond to two distinct grade specific writing prompts: one focused task and one extended task. For each task, the purpose, audience, and form were clearly specified.

The focused task was marked once, while the extended task was double marked (by different markers). The scoring rubrics used for marking were based on the *BC Performance Standards for Writing (Impromptu Writing)*. The BC Performance Standards are available at the following website: http//www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom_assessment/perf_stands/

Teachers guided students through the stages of the writing process in a standardized way using a teacher script. The writing composition was considered to be a first draft and was not assessed as final, polished work.

Sample Grade 4 Writing Prompt

A Most Interesting Person

We all know people who we find interesting.

Think about people you have met in real life or by reading books, watching television, viewing movies, listening to music, or watching sports.

Write about a person you find interesting. Be sure to explain clearly to your reader what makes this person so interesting.

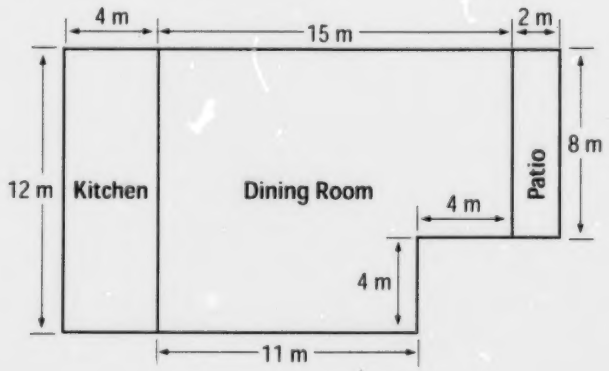
Numeracy

Numeracy can be defined as the combination of mathematical knowledge, problem solving and communication skills required by all persons to function successfully within our technological world. Numeracy is more than knowing about numbers and number operations.

The numeracy component of FSA 2001 consisted of 32 multiple-choice and four written response questions.

Sample Grade 10 Numeracy Questions

1. Annette made a diagram of her restaurant.



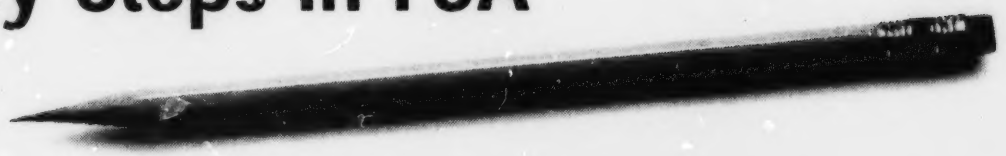
What percentage of the total area is the area of the kitchen?

A. 7.0 %
B. 21.1 %
C. 28.5 %
D. 71.9 %

2. Mitch bought a used car, and almost immediately it needed some repairs. A local garage charged him $74.20 for parts and 1.5 h of labour at a rate of $28 h. If GST and PST must be charged on both parts and labour at a combined rate of 14 %, what was Mitch's total repair bill?

A. $116.50
B. $132.47
C. $153.30
D. $174.76

Key Steps in FSA



Several key steps occur between the conceptualization of FSA test booklets and the release of assessment results. These include design and development, administration, standard setting, marking, reporting, and interpretation of assessment results. Important facts regarding each step are provided below.

Design and Development

Test development begins in the fall prior to the administration with the creation/review of the tables of specification for each component of FSA.

Item-writing and item-review teams of approximately 100 practicing classroom teachers are selected in spring and fall prior to the administration.

Test items and booklets are developed in accordance with the tables of specification for each component of FSA and the prescribed learning outcomes listed in the provincial curricula.

Additional design and development activities include the development of marking keys, social equity reviews of test items and booklets, and technical reviews by subject and measurement specialists.

Test items and booklets are field tested in more than 180 classrooms throughout British Columbia.

Upon completion of all of these activities, final test booklets are produced in the spring prior to the administration.

Administration

FSA is administered in all public and provincially funded independent schools in the first two weeks of May. With limited exceptions, all students in grades 4, 7, and 10 are expected to participate. In total, over 140 000 students write the assessment.

FSA 2001 took students approximately four hours and a half to complete. Most schools administered the tests in three separate sessions.

English and French versions of the tests are available. Programme francophone students receive French versions of test materials and respond in French. All other students, including those in French Immersion programs, receive English versions of the test materials and respond in English.

Standard Setting

FSA results are reported in relation to provincial standards of performance, as defined below.

The "exceeds expectations" standard is defined as the level of a student's performance that is beyond that at which a teacher would say the student has fully met the expectations of the grade on this test. Student performance would be considered excellent for the grade on this test.

The "meets expectations" standard is defined as the level of a student's performance at which a student meets or exceeds the widely held expectations for the grade on this test.

The "not yet within expectations" standard is defined as the level of a student's performance at which a teacher, with no other information, would want to know more about the reasons for a student's low performance.

The following activities and processes contribute to setting appropriate standards for FSA.

- Each FSA test is developed from prescribed learning outcomes listed in the provincial curricula. These learning outcomes are the content standards for Kindergarten to Grade 12. They describe what students are expected to know and be able to do in all subject areas and grades.
- FSA content standards are set when the specifications for the assessment are developed. This is done by identifying the general categories of learning outcomes to be addressed in the assessment. The content standards for the assessment are communicated to schools prior to the FSA administration.
- The curricular and FSA content standards, and the ability range of BC students are used to develop individual test items and each test as a whole.
- Standards for expected student performance are set when scoring guides are developed and examples of student work at each level of performance (exemplars) are selected.
- Standards are communicated when over five hundred BC teachers are trained to mark student responses. Reliable standards are maintained by checking the consistency with which marks are assigned during marking sessions.
- After the FSA administration, experienced teachers from across British Columbia provide advice on the scores students need to receive to meet or exceed provincial expectations for each specific component. These scores are used as the basis for calculating and reporting the proportion of students not yet within expectations, meeting expectations, or exceeding expectations.
- Statistical measurement techniques are employed to enable the performance on different years' tests to be compare against a common standard. This process allows for a benchmark to be established and improvement over time to be measured in a reliable manner.

Marking

In July 2001, over 500 BC teachers marked the writing test and reading comprehension and numeracy written-response questions.

For the writing component, a scoring guide derived from the *Performance Standards* was used to score tests at grades 4, 7, and 10. Each booklet was scored with the input of three markers. These scores were combined to derive a total writing score.

For the reading comprehension and numeracy components, a total score was obtained by adding students' scores on the multiple-choice questions to the scores obtained on the written-response questions.

Scoring guides for the writing and numeracy components of FSA 2001 are included in Appendix B of *Interpreting and Communicating British Columbia Foundation Skills Assessment Results 2001*, available on the FSA website at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/interpret.htm

Reporting

Provincial, district, and school results are released in the fall following the administration of the assessment.

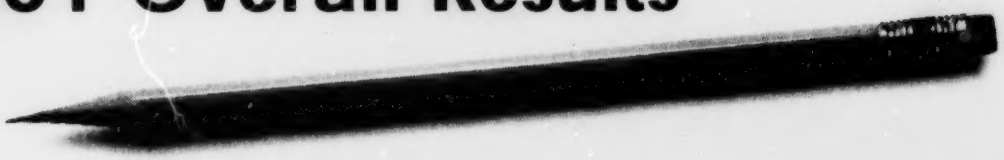
Individual student results are sent to schools shortly thereafter for distribution to students and parents or guardians.

Interpretation

An advisory committee on provincial assessments, comprising representatives of provincial education organizations, reviews provincial FSA results annually and provides recommendations to the Ministry of Education on actions that should take place to support and improve student learning and achievement.

Interpretation of school and district results takes place at the local level in the context of existing planning activities. The FSA offers schools and districts an important source of information that can be readily incorporated into annual accreditation activities (e.g., annual reports to school boards, development of school growth plans). The FSA is one of seven required sources of evidence for school and district personnel to consider as part of the accreditation process (the other sources of evidence are school report card results, student attendance records, surveys, Grade 12 Examination and participation rates, grade-to-grade transitions, and graduation rates). Explicit guidelines to schools and districts on how FSA results should be incorporated into the new accreditation process are provided in BC Public Schools Accreditation Policy and the accreditation manual for schools (both available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/accreditation).

2001 Overall Results



In the following section, the overall provincial results for grades 4, 7, and 10 are provided.

A note about statistics:

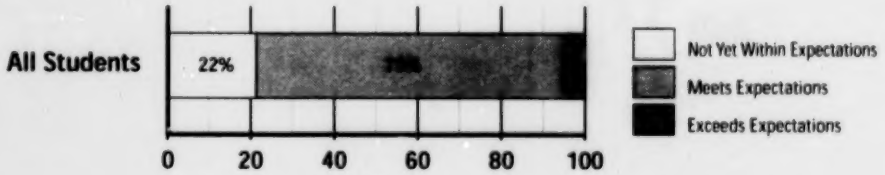
All percentages in this document are expressed as whole numbers and therefore may not add up to 100. Small differences between grades or groups of students should be interpreted with caution.

Grade 4 Results

Across the province, 46 449 Grade 4 students (94 % of all Grade 4 students) participated in at least one component of the assessment.

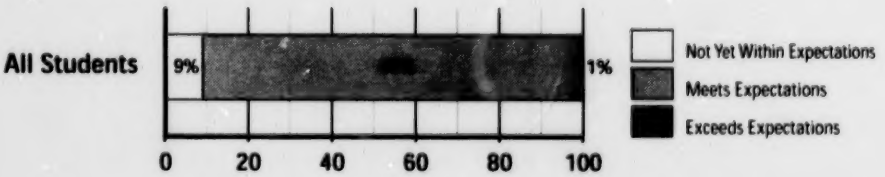
Reading Comprehension

Overall, 78 % of Grade 4 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 73 % that met expectations and the 5 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-two percent of Grade 4 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Writing

Overall, 91 % of Grade 4 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 90 % that met expectations and the 1 % that exceeded expectations. Nine percent of Grade 4 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Numeracy

Overall, 84 % of Grade 4 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 73 % that met expectations and the 10 % that exceeded expectations. Sixteen percent of Grade 4 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.

Grade 4 Results

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Reading Comprehension

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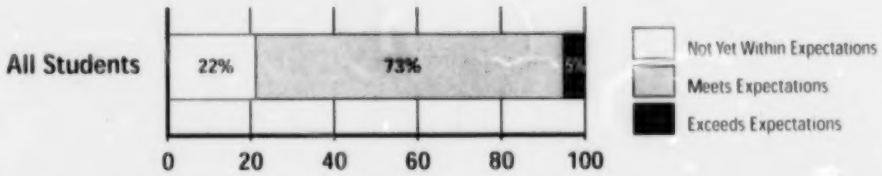

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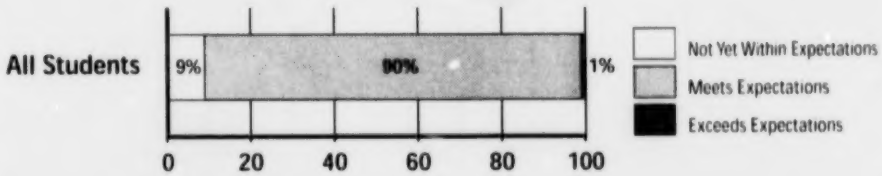

Numeracy

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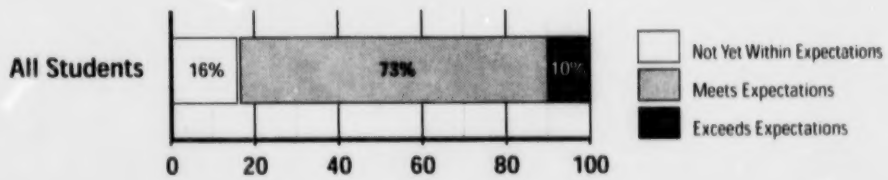
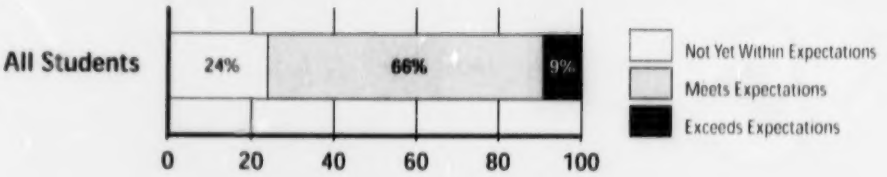


Grade 7 Results

Across the province, 47 736 Grade 7 students (94 % of all Grade 7 students) participated in at least one component of the assessment.

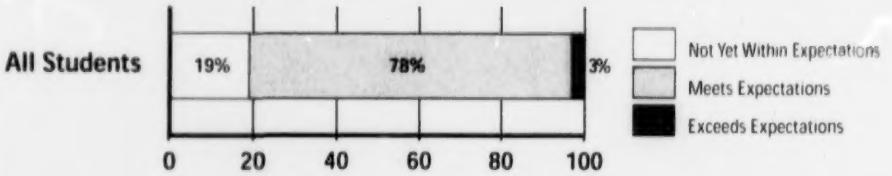
Reading Comprehension

Overall, 76 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 66 % that met expectations and the 9 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-four percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



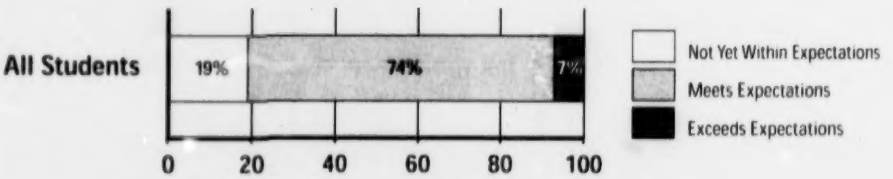
Writing

Overall, 81 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 78 % that met expectations and the 3 % that exceeded expectations. Nineteen percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Numeracy

Overall, 81 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 74 % that met expectations and the 7 % that exceeded expectations. Nineteen percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.

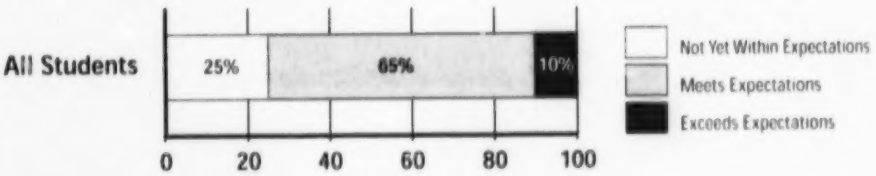


Grade 10 Results

Across the province, 47 841 Grade 10 students (83 % of all Grade 10 students) participated in at least one component of the assessment.

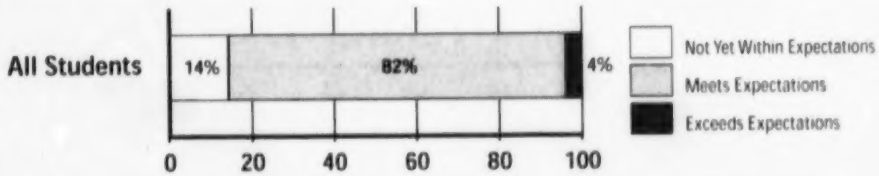
Reading Comprehension

Overall, 75 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 65 % that met expectations and the 10 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-five percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



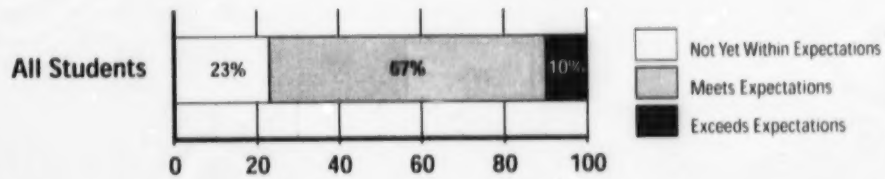
Writing

Overall, 86 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 82 % that met expectations and the 4 % that exceeded expectations. Fourteen percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Numeracy

Overall, 77 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 67 % that met expectations and the 10 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-three percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.

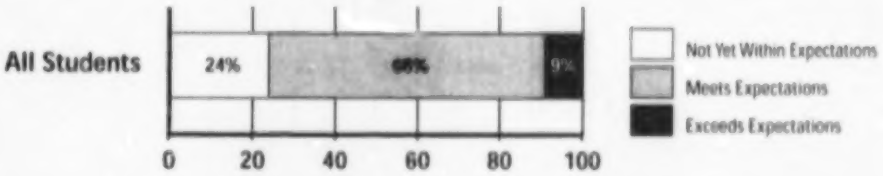


Grade 7 Results

Across the province, 47 736 Grade 7 students (94 % of all Grade 7 students) participated in at least one component of the assessment.

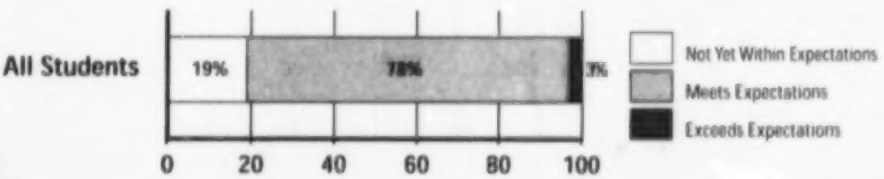
Reading Comprehension

Overall, 76 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 66 % that met expectations and the 9 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-four percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



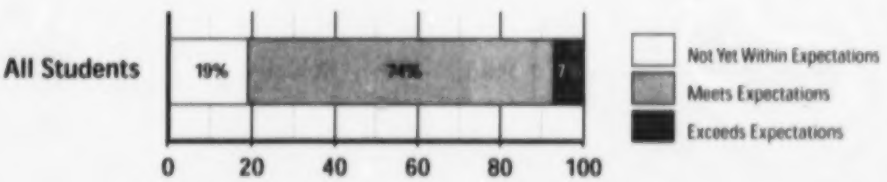
Writing

Overall, 81 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 78 % that met expectations and the 3 % that exceeded expectations. Nineteen percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Numeracy

Overall, 81 % of Grade 7 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 74 % that met expectations and the 7 % that exceeded expectations. Nineteen percent of Grade 7 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.

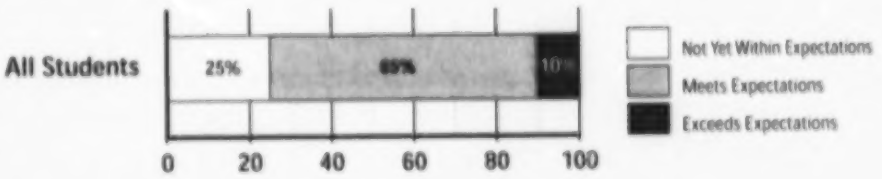


Grade 10 Results

Across the province, 47 841 Grade 10 students (83 % of all Grade 10 students) participated in at least one component of the assessment.

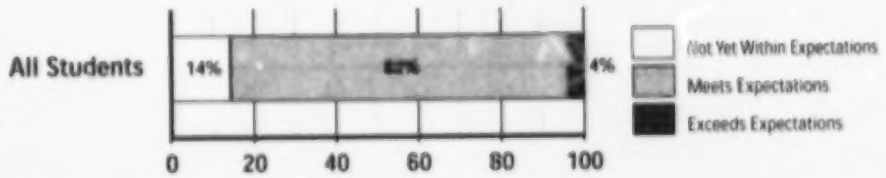
Reading Comprehension

Overall, 75 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 65 % that met expectations and the 10 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-five percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



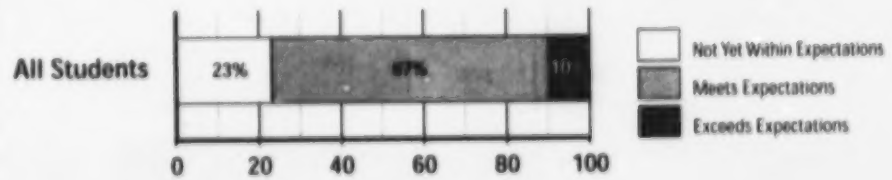
Writing

Overall, 86 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 82 % that met expectations and the 4 % that exceeded expectations. Fourteen percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



Numeracy

Overall, 77 % of Grade 10 students' work met or exceeded the expectations defined for their grade; this includes the 67 % that met expectations and the 10 % that exceeded expectations. Twenty-three percent of Grade 10 students' work was not yet within the expectations defined for their grade.



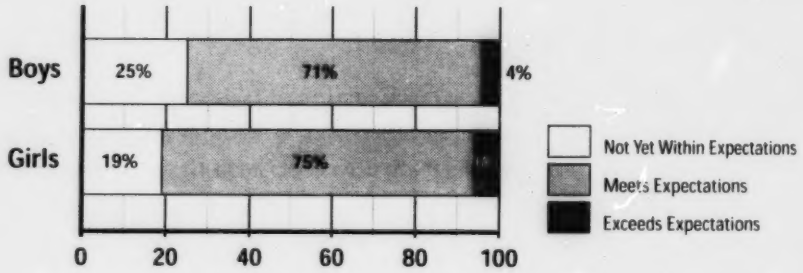
2001 Results of Particular Student Populations

Results By Gender

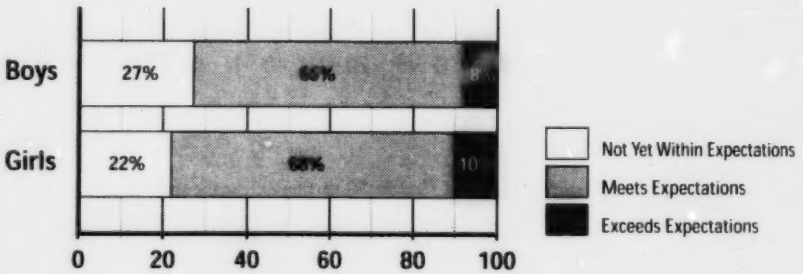
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, girls performed better than boys on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

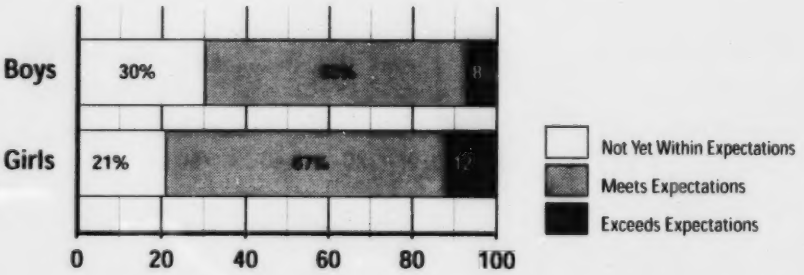
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

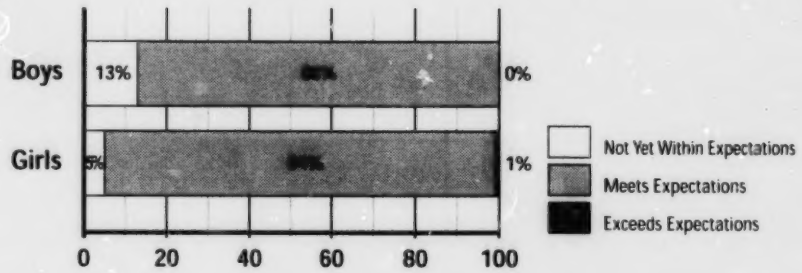


Results By Gender

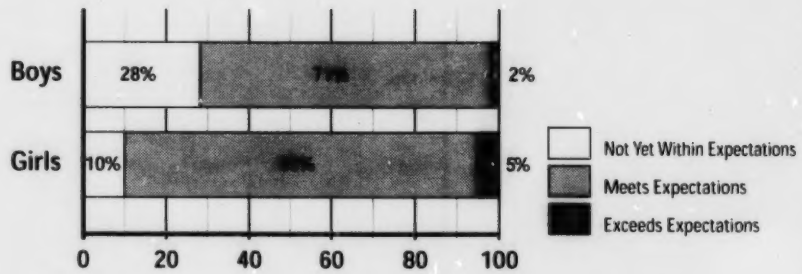
Writing

Across all grades, girls performed better than boys on the writing component of the assessment.

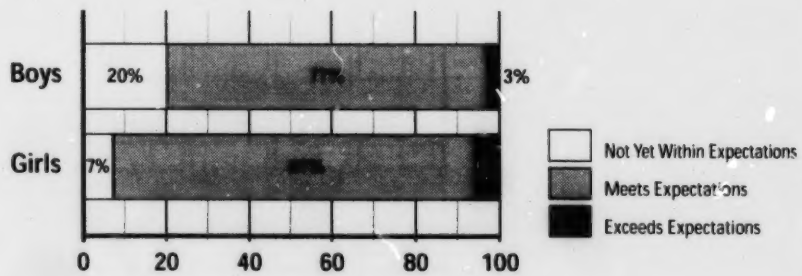
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10



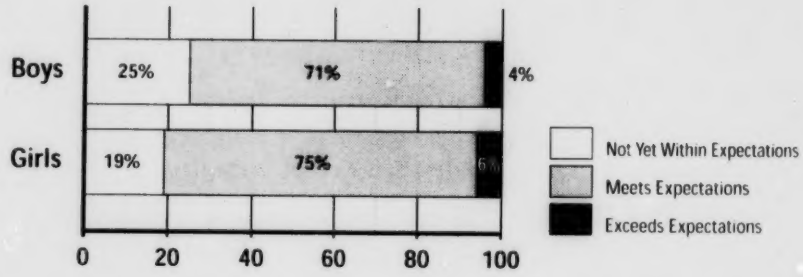
2001 Results of Particular Student Populations

Results By Gender

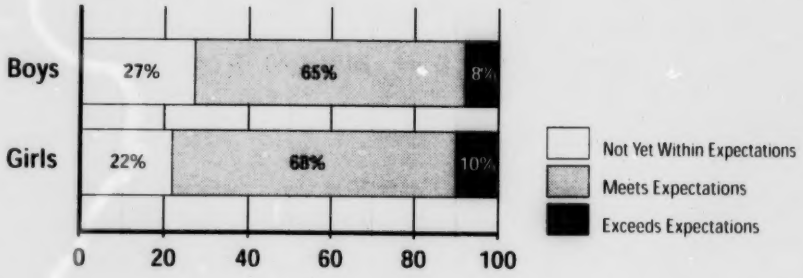
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, girls performed better than boys on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

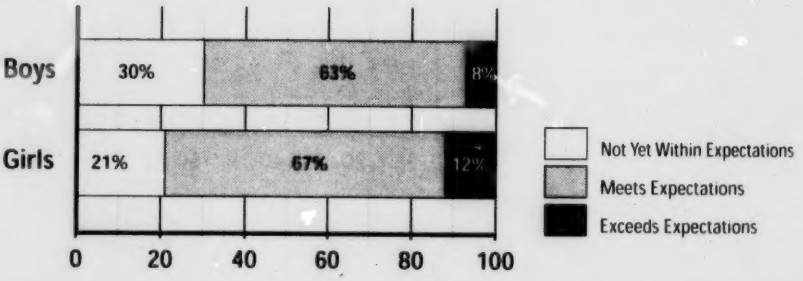
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

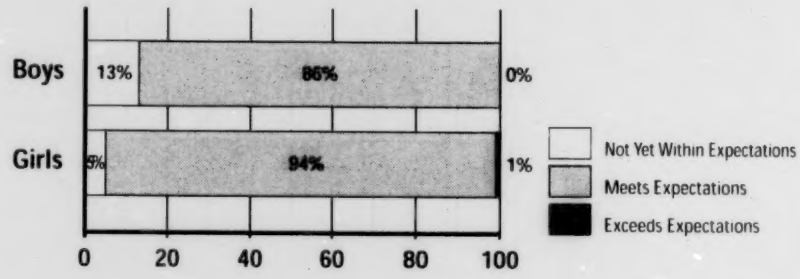


Results By Gender

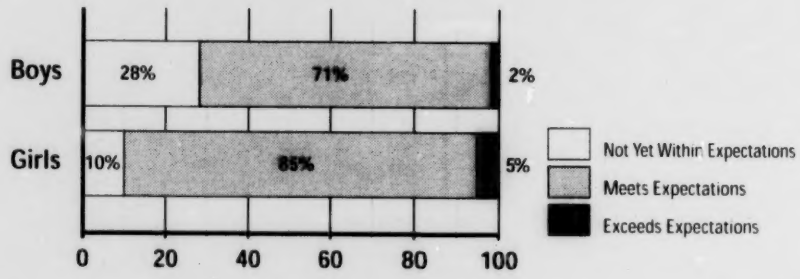
Writing

Across all grades, girls performed better than boys on the writing component of the assessment.

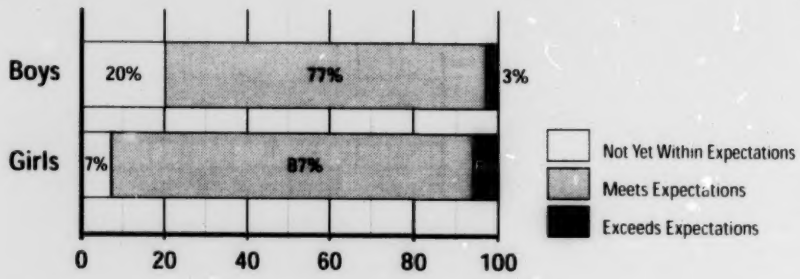
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

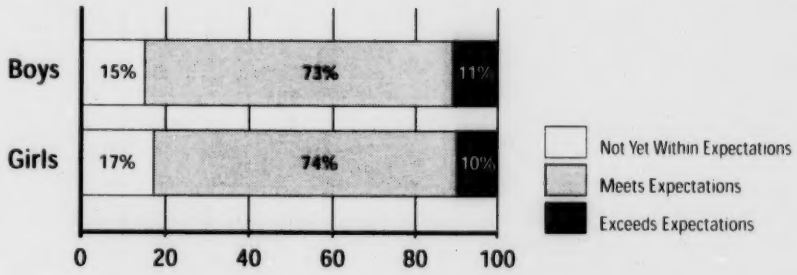


Results By Gender

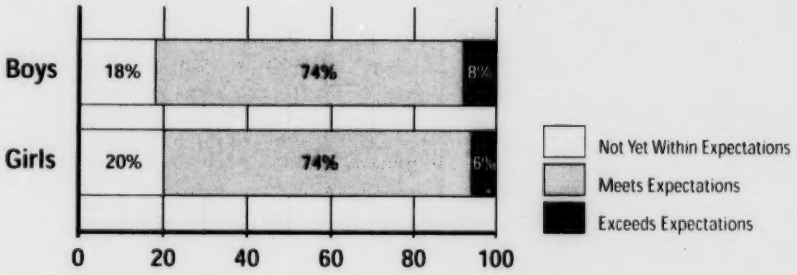
Numeracy

Across all grades, girls and boys performed about the same on the numeracy component of the assessment.

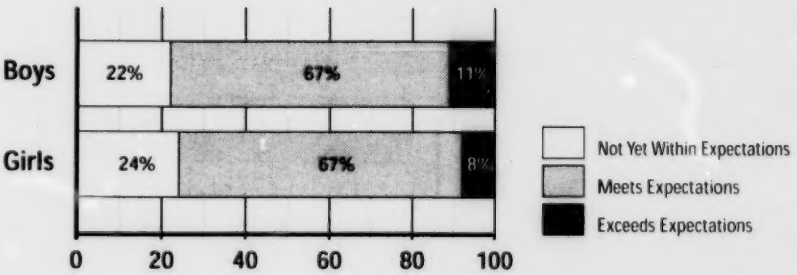
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

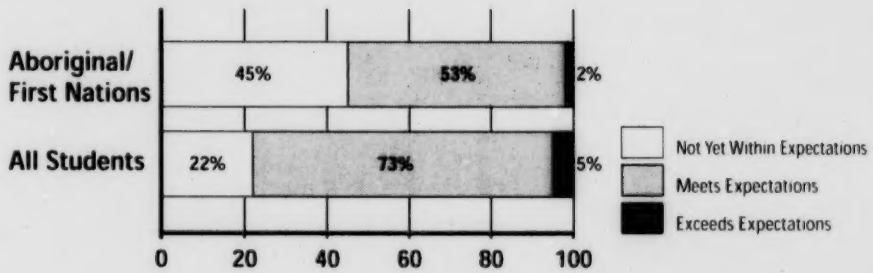


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

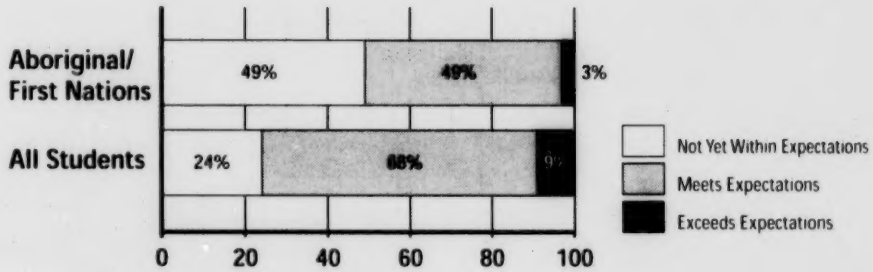
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

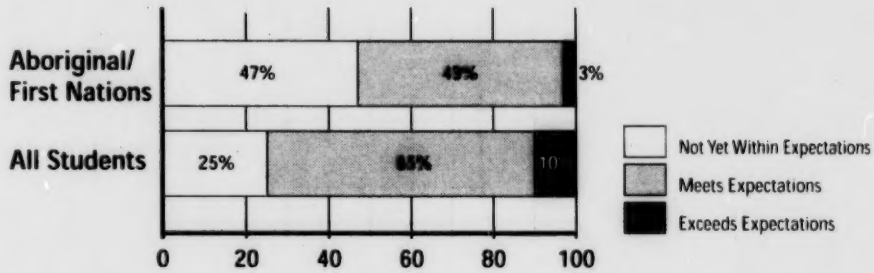
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

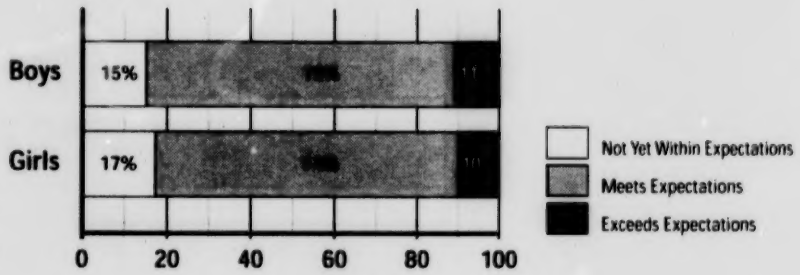


Results By Gender

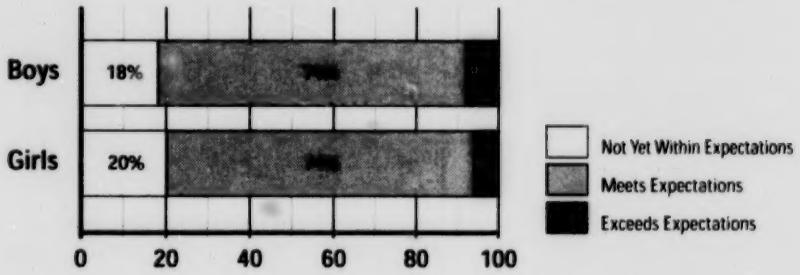
Numeracy

Across all grades, girls and boys performed about the same on the numeracy component of the assessment.

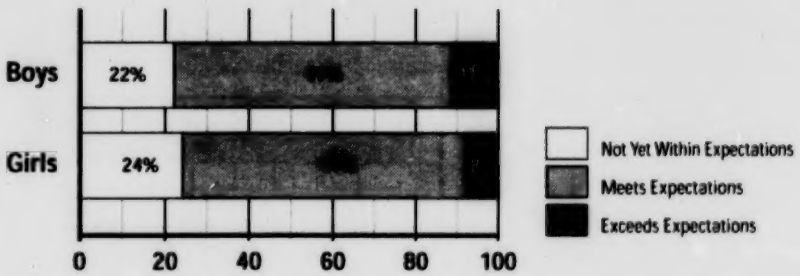
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

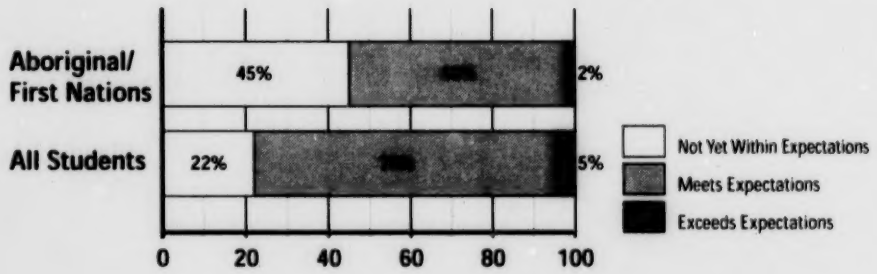


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

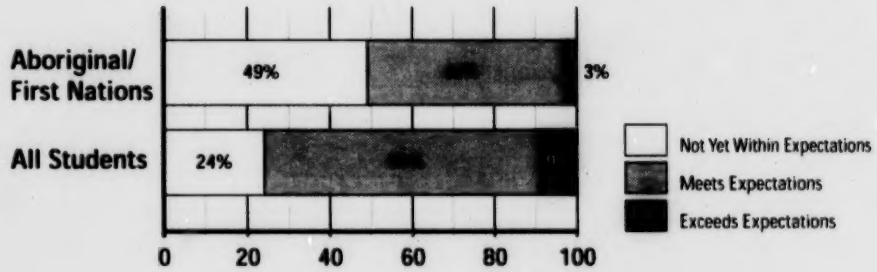
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

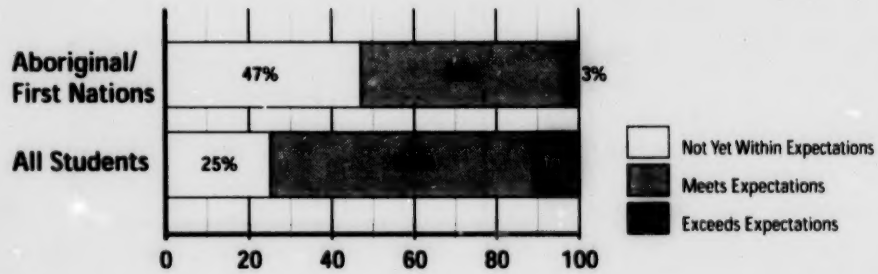
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

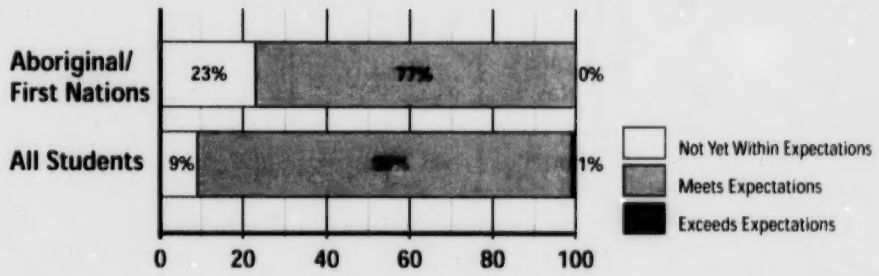


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

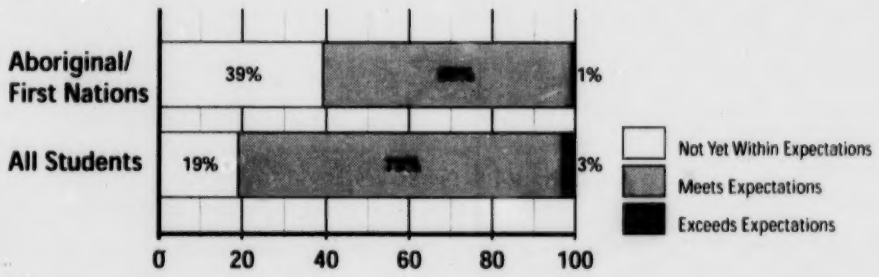
Writing

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the writing component of the assessment.

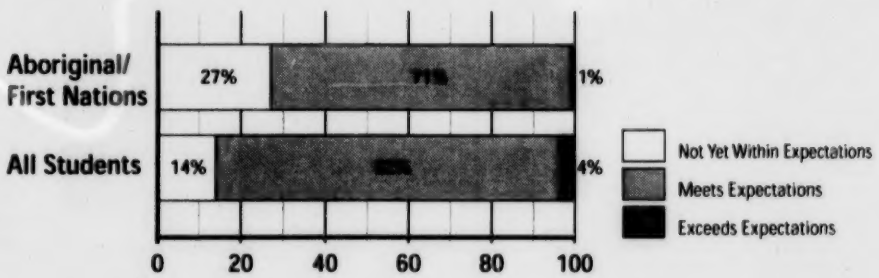
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

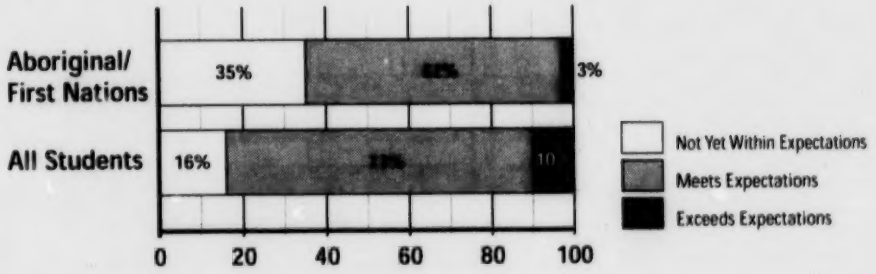


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

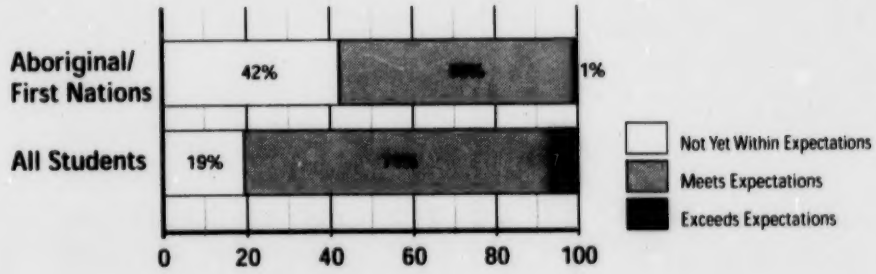
Numeracy

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the numeracy component of the assessment.

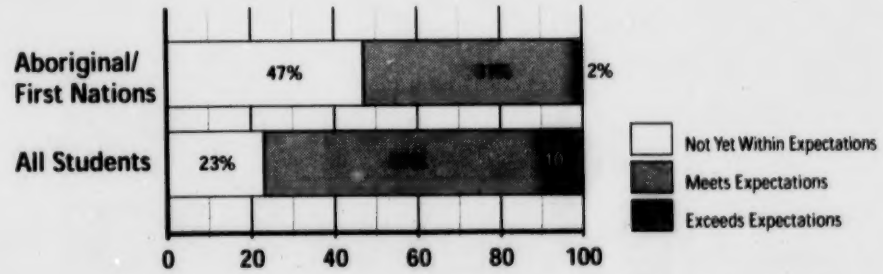
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

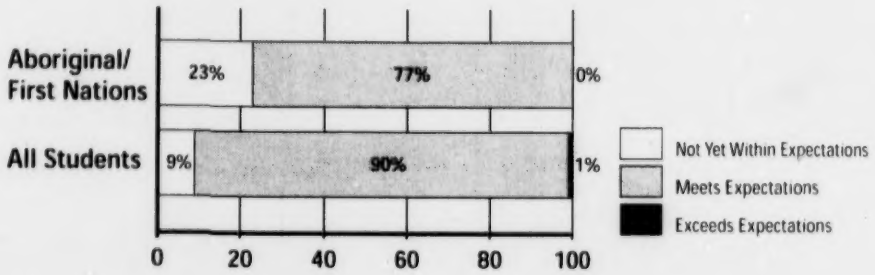


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

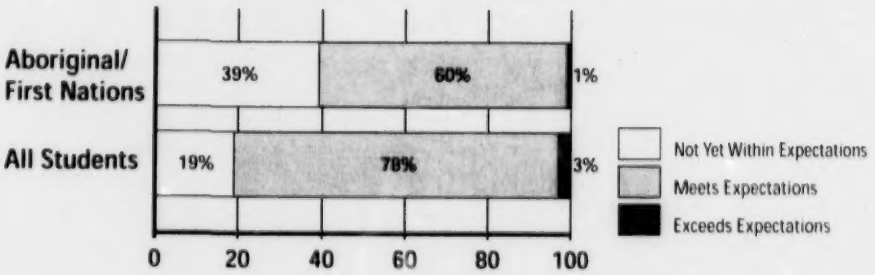
Writing

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the writing component of the assessment.

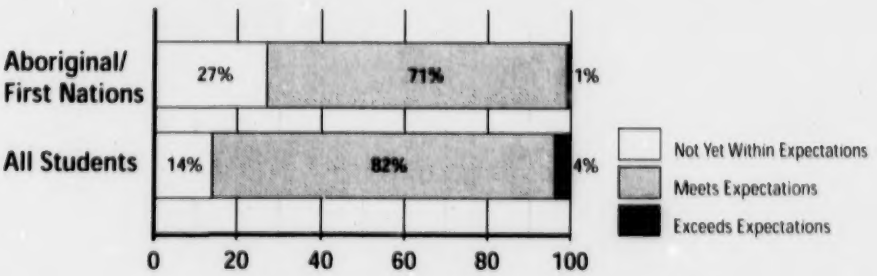
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

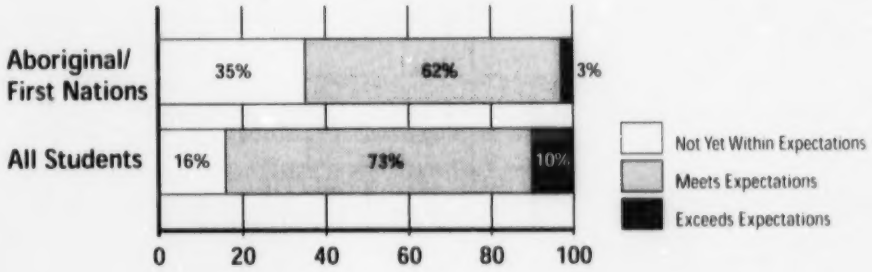


Aboriginal/First Nations Students

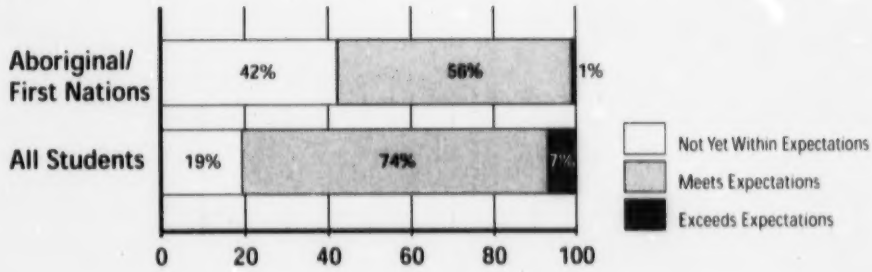
Numeracy

Across all grades, Aboriginal/First Nations students did not perform as well as students as a whole on the numeracy component of the assessment.

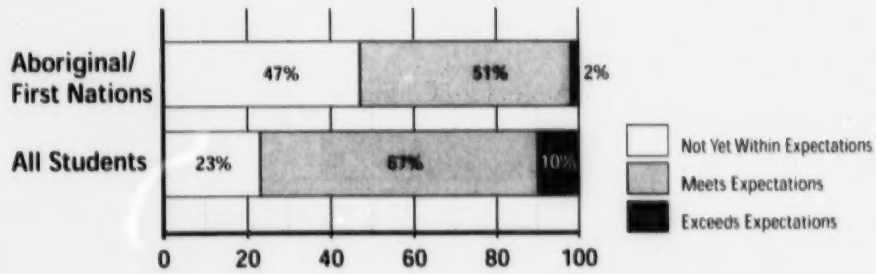
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

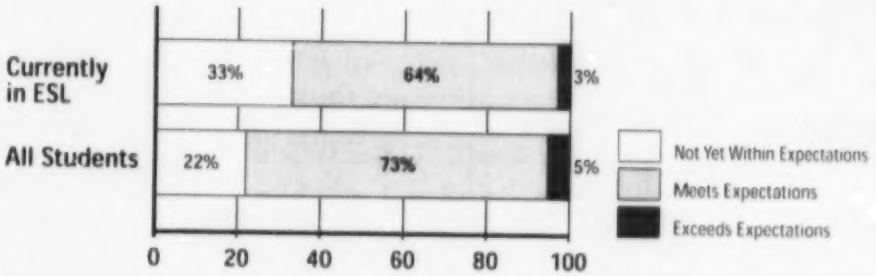


English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

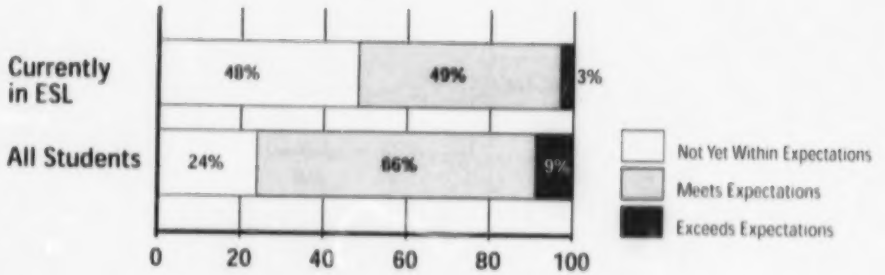
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, students currently enrolled in an ESL program did not perform as well as students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

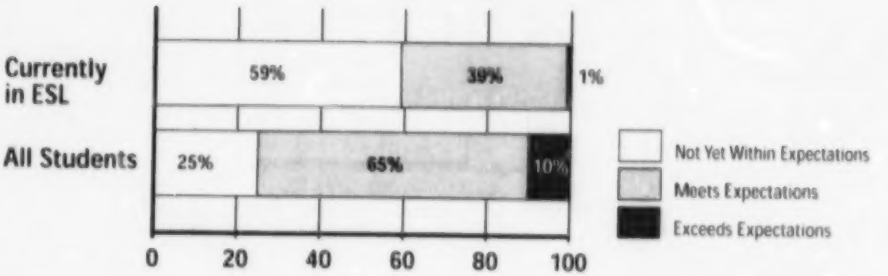
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

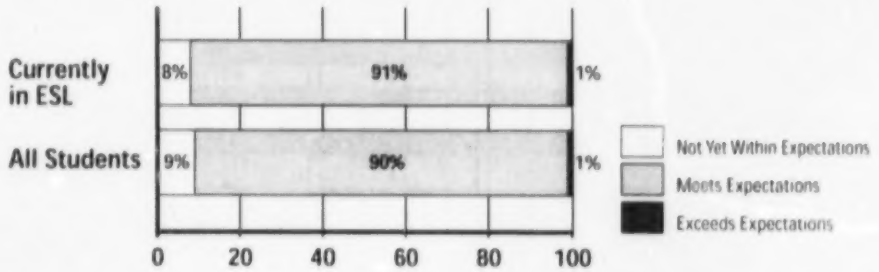


English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

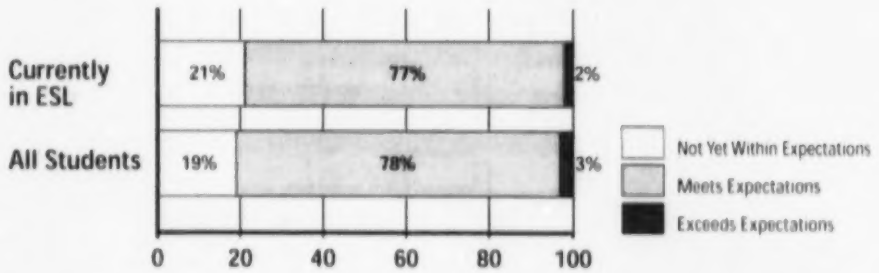
Writing

The writing results of students currently enrolled in ESL programs were about the same as students as a whole in grades 4 and 7, but were lower than students as a whole in Grade 10.

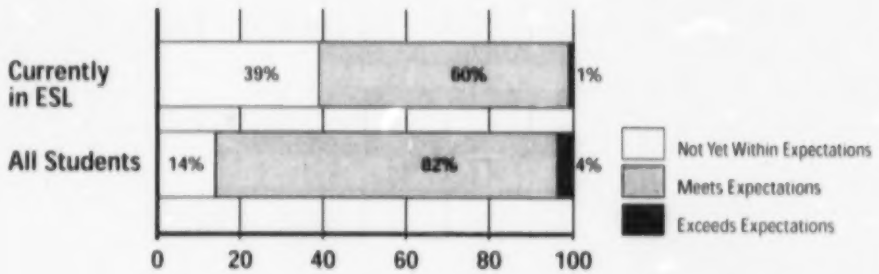
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

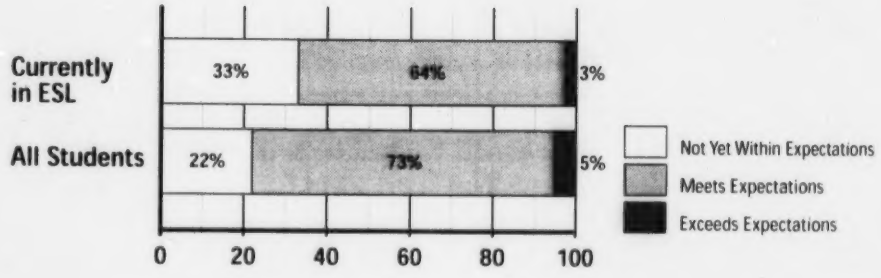


English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

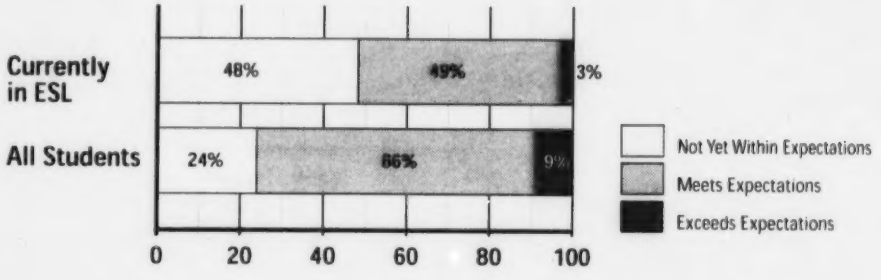
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, students currently enrolled in an ESL program did not perform as well as students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

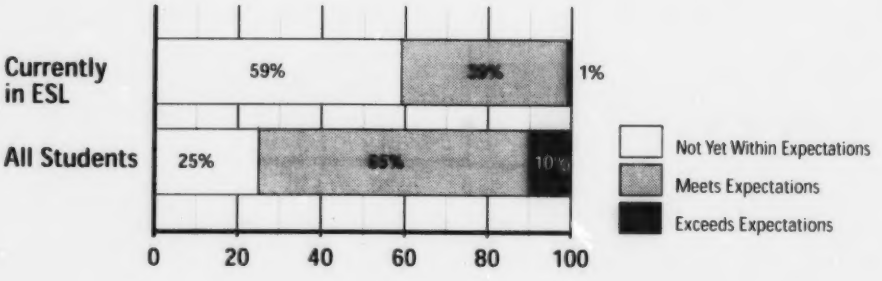
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

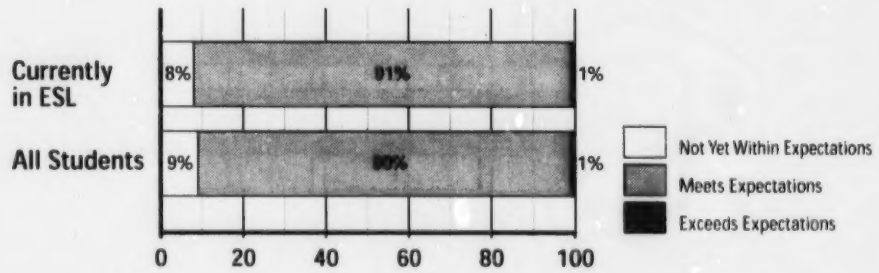


English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

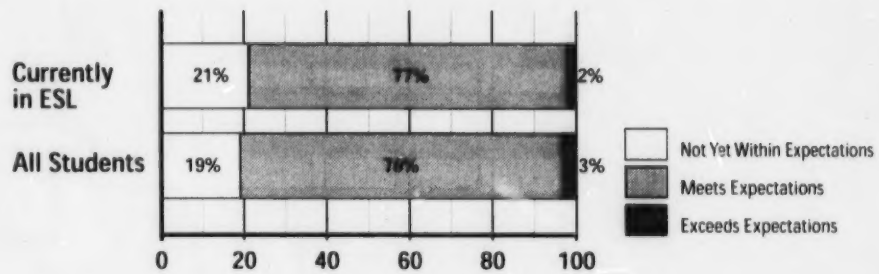
Writing

The writing results of students currently enrolled in ESL programs were about the same as students as a whole in grades 4 and 7, but were lower than students as a whole in Grade 10.

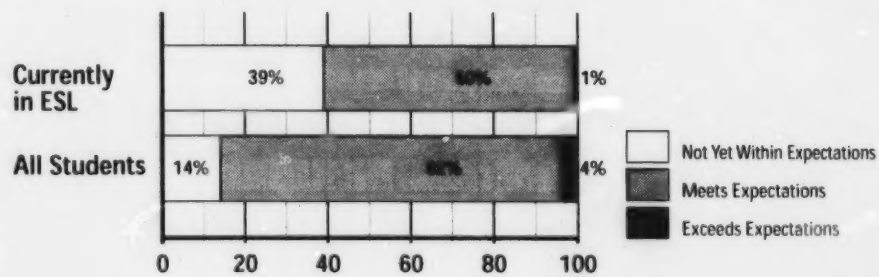
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

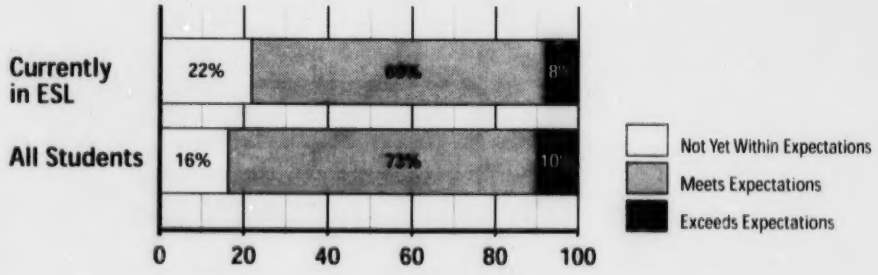


English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

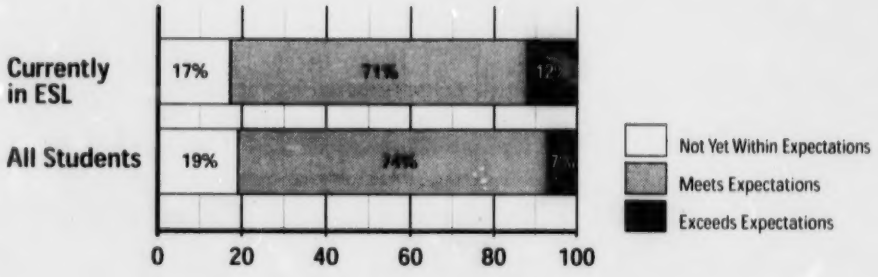
Numeracy

The numeracy results of students currently enrolled in ESL programs were lower than students as a whole in grade 4, but about the same as students as a whole in grades 7 and 10.

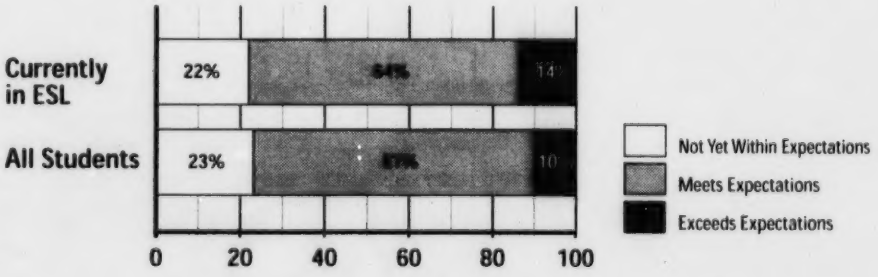
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

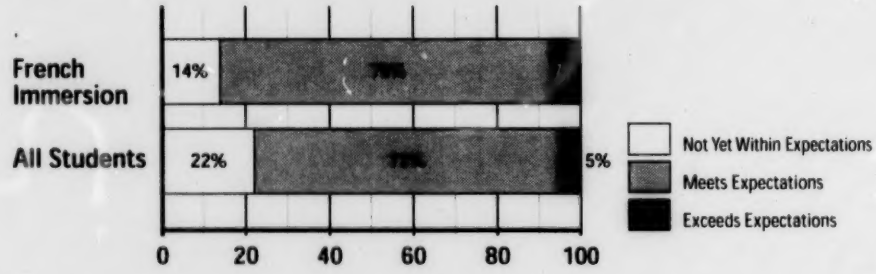


French Immersion Students

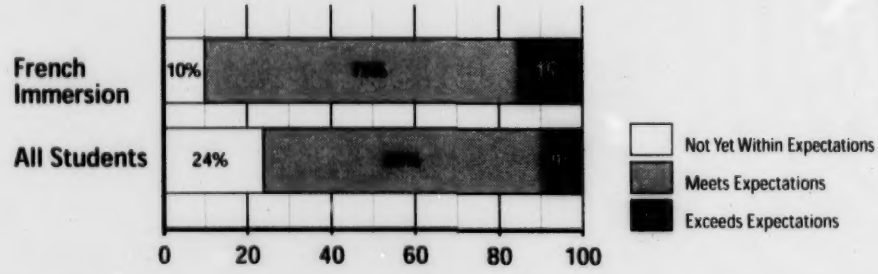
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, French Immersion students performed better than students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

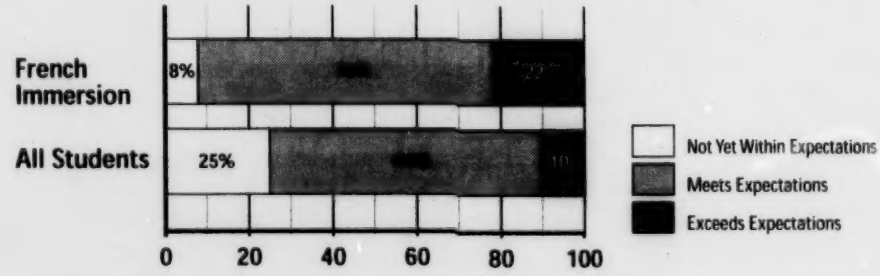
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10



English As a Second Language (ESL) Students

Numeracy

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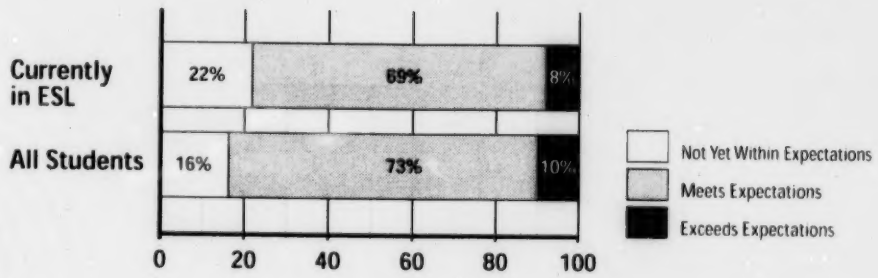
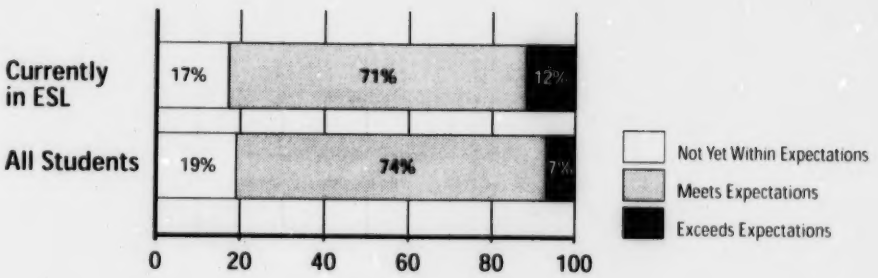
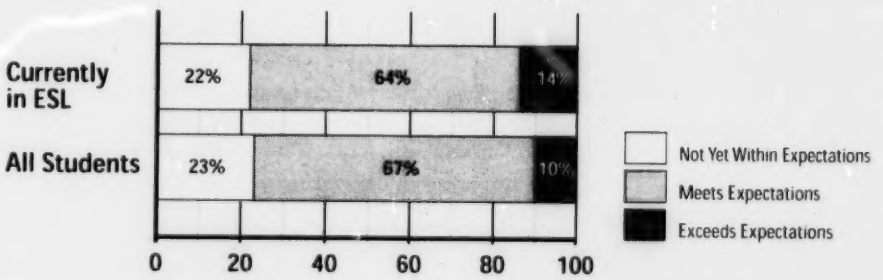
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

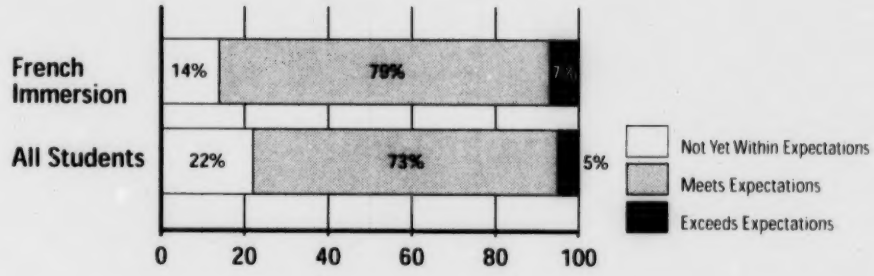


French Immersion Students

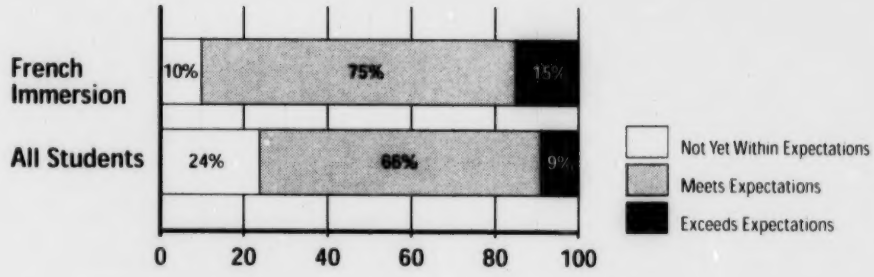
Reading Comprehension

Across all grades, French Immersion students performed better than students as a whole on the reading comprehension component of the assessment.

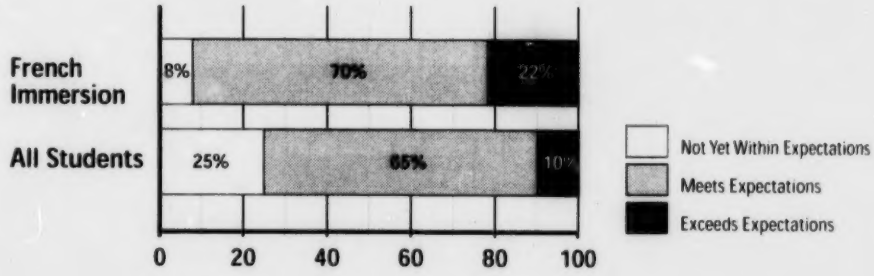
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

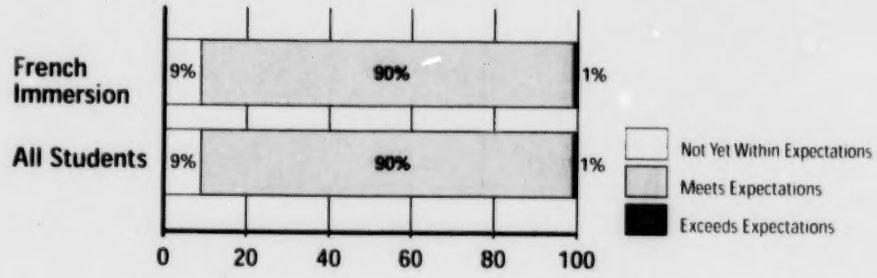


French Immersion Students

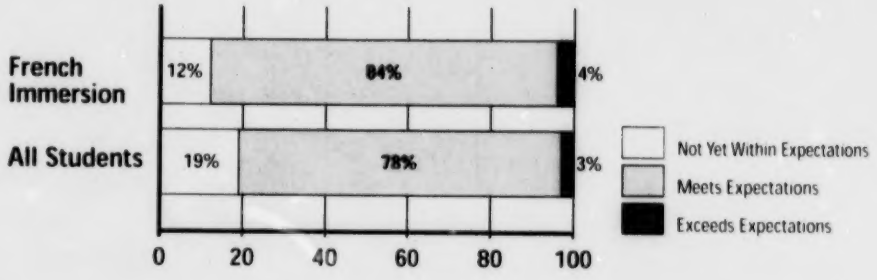
Writing

The writing results of French Immersion students were the same as students as a whole in Grade 4, and were higher than students as a whole in grades 7 and 10.

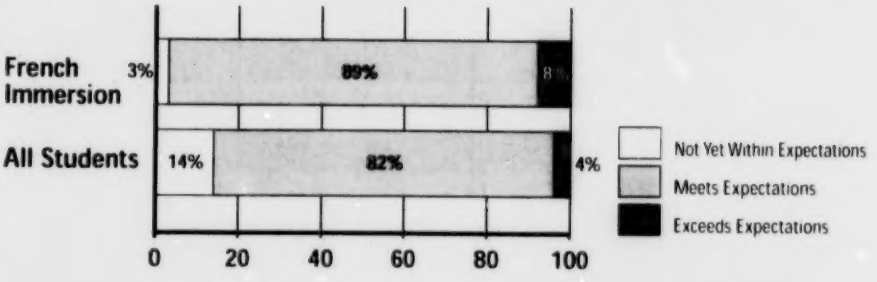
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

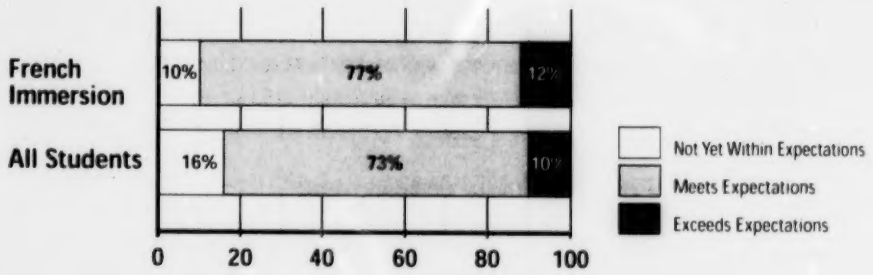


French Immersion Students

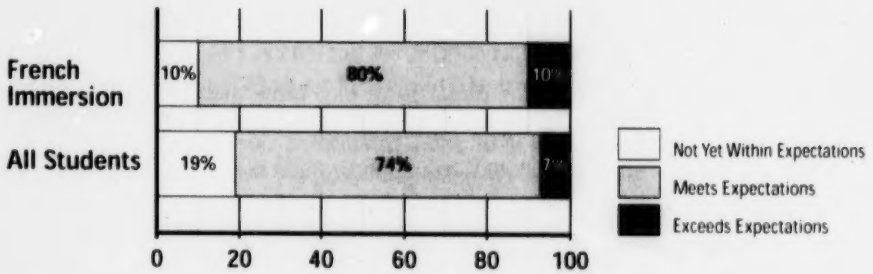
Numeracy

Across all grades, French Immersion students performed better than students as a whole on the numeracy component of the assessment.

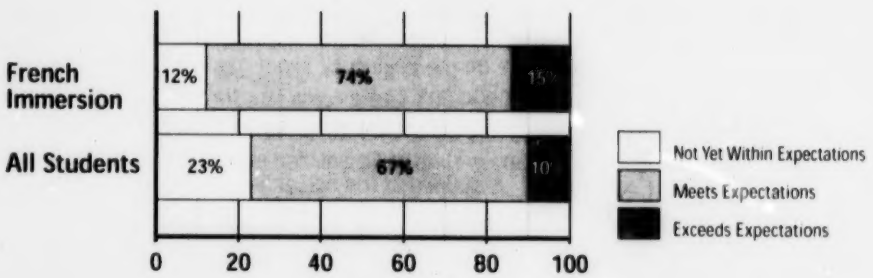
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10



French Immersion Students

Writing

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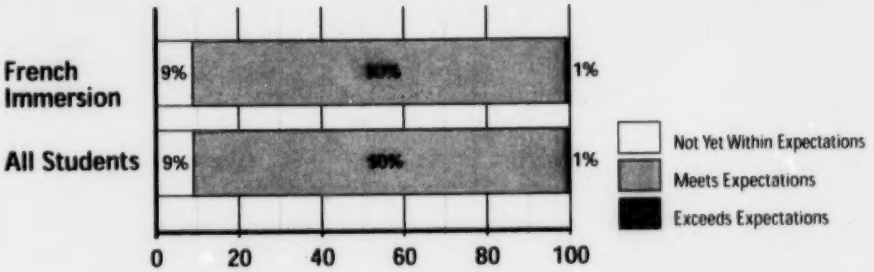
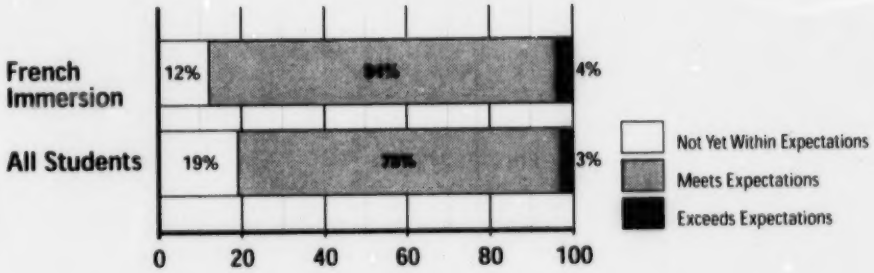
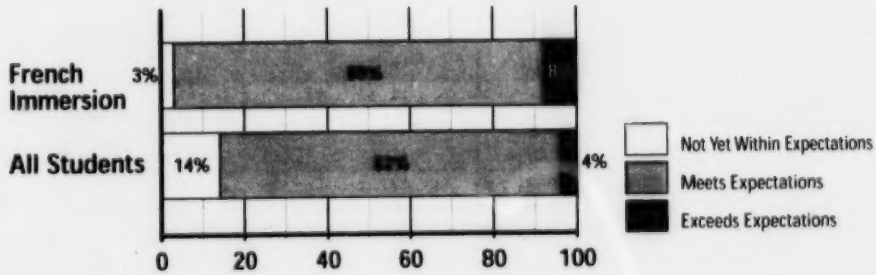
Grade 4



Grade 7



Grade 10

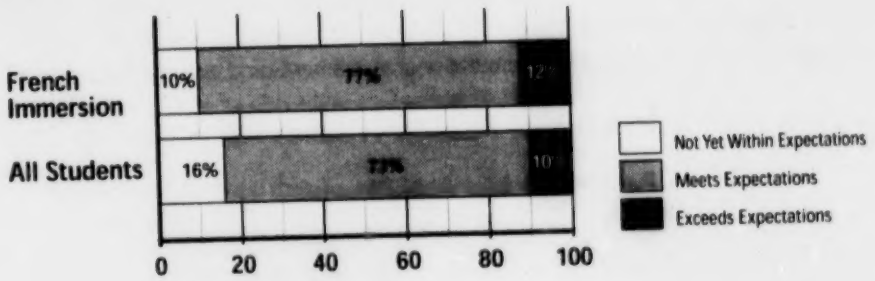


French Immersion Students

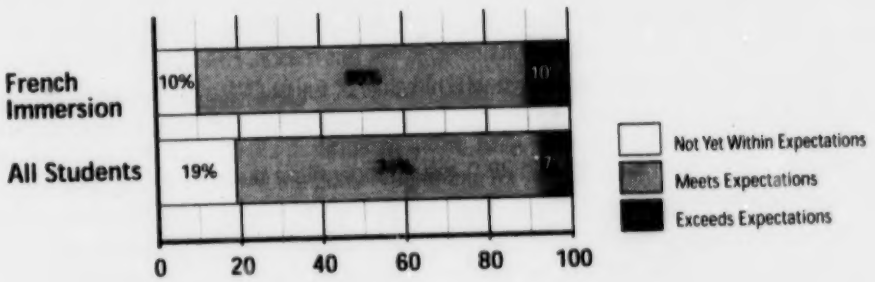
Numeracy

Across all grades, French Immersion students performed better than students as a whole on the numeracy component of the assessment.

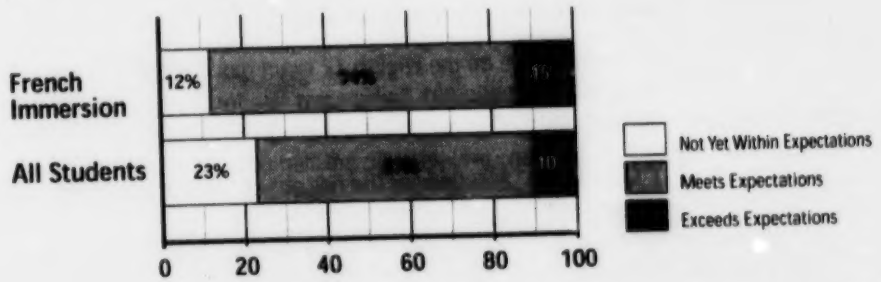
Grade 4



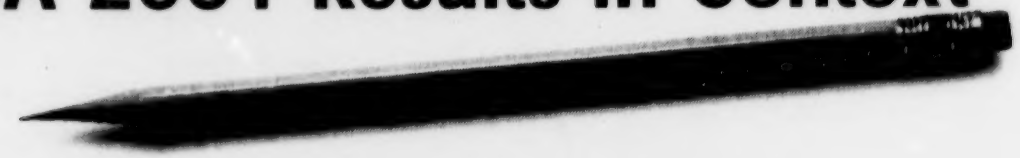
Grade 7



Grade 10



FSA 2001 Results in Context



To provide further context to FSA 2001 results, it is worthwhile to consider how BC students have performed on other provincial assessments and examinations, as well as on national and international assessments and examinations.

Results of Past Provincial Assessments and Examinations

Past Provincial Assessments

In 1999, the first FSA was administered to grades 4, 7, and 10 students. In an effort to introduce the assessment into the school system gradually, results of FSA 1999 were reported at the provincial and district levels only.

FSA 2000 was the first full implementation of this annual assessment, in which provincial, district, school, and student level results were available for each component. Differences in test design, administration, and reporting procedures make comparisons between 1999 and 2000 FSA results difficult. For this reason, FSA 2000 Reading and Numeracy serve as the baseline against which results of future FSA may be compared. Due to significant changes made to the FSA 2000 Writing, FSA 2001 Writing will serve as the baseline.

FSA 2000 and 2001 results show slight fluctuations across the three grade levels: students' performance in 2001 is slightly lower for reading comprehension and slightly higher for numeracy. Although year-to-year results in reading comprehension and numeracy can be compared, several more years of results are needed before trends will emerge.

Past Provincial Senior Secondary Examinations

Student performance on Grade 12 examinations in English 12 and Principles of Mathematics 12 has remained relatively constant over the past five years.

The success rate on the English 12 exam has been between 87 % and 91 % between 1996-97 and 2000-2001. The success rate for Principles of Mathematics 12 has been between 82 % and 85 % over the same time period.

("Success rate" is defined as the percentage of all students who received a grade of C- or better on the exam.)

The participation rate in the English 12 exam has ranged from 71 % to 74 % between 1996-97 and 2000-2001. The participation rate in the Principles of Mathematics 12 exam has ranged from 37 % to 39 %.

("Participation rate" is defined as the number of exam writers for the course divided by the September 30 Grade 12 enrolment headcount, expressed as a percentage.)

More information on provincial senior secondary examinations reports is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/standrep.htm

Results of National and International Assessments

National Assessments

British Columbia has participated in a number of national assessments of reading, writing, and mathematics. The most recent of these have been the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) assessments of reading and writing in 1998, science in 1999, and mathematics in 2001.

The 1998 SAIP results showed that 13- and 16-year-old students from British Columbia performed similarly in reading and writing to Canadian students as a whole.

The 1999 SAIP results showed that 13- and 16-year-old students from British Columbia performed as well as, or better in science than Canadian students as a whole.

The 2001 SAIP mathematics assessment results will be released in spring 2002.

More information on the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/nat_int_assess.htm

International Assessments

Internationally, British Columbia participated in the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the 2000 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international assessment of reading, mathematics, and science. Results for the 1999 TIMSS were released in December 2000. Results for the 2000 PISA were released in December 2001.

The 1999 TIMSS assessment tested Grade 8 students from 38 countries. Major findings from the 1999 TIMSS are provided below.

- The average performance of BC students in both mathematics and science was significantly higher than the international averages and not significantly different than the Canadian averages.
- In both mathematics and science, BC students had significantly higher scores than students from more than half the participating countries, including United States, New Zealand, Italy, and Israel.
- Six of the 38 countries had scores that were statistically higher than British Columbia's in mathematics and two in science. Only Taiwan and Singapore had significantly higher scores than British Columbia in both subjects.

- Quebec was the only province with mathematics scores that were significantly higher than British Columbia. Alberta was the only province with science scores that were significantly higher than British Columbia.
- TIMSS results for BC students in both mathematics and science were not statistically different from a similar test administered in 1995.

The 2000 PISA assessment tested 15-year old students from 32 countries. Major findings from 2000 PISA are provided below.

- The average performance of BC students in reading, mathematics, and science was significantly higher than the international averages and not significantly different than the Canadian averages.
- In all three domains, BC students had significantly higher scores than students from more than two thirds of the participating countries, including United States, Italy, and Spain.
- None of the 32 countries had scores that were statistically higher than British Columbia's in reading. Only Japan and Korea had significantly higher scores than British Columbia in mathematics; and only Korea had significantly higher scores than British Columbia in science.
- Quebec and Alberta were the only provinces with mathematics scores that were significantly higher than British Columbia.

More information on the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the 2000 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/nat_int_assess.htm

Summary of National and International Assessment Results

In general, results from national and international assessments show that British Columbia students are performing about the same in reading, mathematics, and science as other students in Canada and better than other students internationally.

To maximize the amount of information obtained from national and international assessments, the Ministry of Education produced a separate document for schools and districts that provides further details on the performance of BC students on the 1999 TIMSS and 1999 SAIP assessments, and how they relate to data obtained from FSA 2000. The document is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/nat_int_pubs.htm

Results of International Senior Secondary Examinations

International senior secondary examinations provide further indication of how BC students perform on an international scale.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations

The international Advanced Placement (AP) program gives students an opportunity to take college-level courses and exams while still in high school. Results from recent AP English Literature and Composition and Calculus examinations (all of which are scored on a five-point scale) are provided below.

- In 2001, the global average grade for AP English Language and Composition was 2.8. The Canadian average grade was 3.1; the British Columbia average grade was 3.1.
- In 2001, the global average grade for AP English Literature and Composition was 3.0. The Canadian average grade was 3.1; the British Columbia average grade was 3.1.
- In 2001, the global average grade for AP Calculus (AB) was 3.0. The Canadian average grade was 3.6; the British Columbia average grade was 3.7. The global average grade for AP Calculus (BC) was 3.6. The Canadian average grade was 3.7; the British Columbia average grade was 4.00.
- More students from British Columbia participate in AP examinations than from any other Canadian jurisdiction. Of 4894 AP English Literature and Composition and Calculus examinations written by Canadian students in 2001, almost half (2256) were written by students from British Columbia.

More information on the Advanced Placement (AP) program is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/related_sites.htm

International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is a comprehensive and rigorous two year curriculum for students in Grades 11 and 12 that leads to international examinations. Results from IB English and Mathematics examinations held in 2001 (scored on a seven-point scale) are provided below.

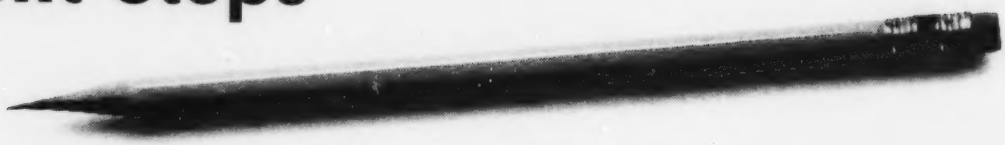
- In 2001, the global average grade for English (Al -Higher Level) was 5.0. The Canadian average grade was 5.2; the British Columbia average grade was 4.9.
- In 2001, the global average grade for Mathematical Methods (Standard Level) was 4.8. The Canadian average grade was 5.2; the British Columbia average grade was 4.9.

More information on the International Baccalaureate (IB) program is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/related_sites.htm

Summary of International Senior Secondary Examination Results

In general, the performance of British Columbia students on internationally recognized senior secondary examinations is comparable to the performance of students globally and across Canada.

Next Steps



FSA provides valuable information that can be used by the province, districts, schools, students, and parents or guardians in conjunction with other available data on student achievement. Activities are already underway to maximize the positive impact FSA results can have on student learning.

Under the accreditation program, schools and districts are incorporating their FSA results into existing plans for improving students' reading, writing, and numeracy skills.

Teachers, parents, and students are using FSA results as an additional, external source of information about a student's performance in important foundation skills. FSA results, together with other information collected by teachers, will help focus home-school discussions about how to improve student learning.

The ministry is conducting the necessary analyses on data from FSA 2001 and all subsequent Foundation Skills Assessments to enable schools and districts to monitor their performance over time and make plans for improvement.

Based on the findings of FSA 2001, the ministry will determine how best to promote and support student improvement activities in the school system. More information is available at the FSA Web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/

A note of thanks

We wish to express our appreciation to the teachers and administrators of British Columbia who gave care and attention to the administration of the assessment.

Notes